

the Greater Tri-Cities. Dr. Peters is a committed leader who shares his tremendous experience and talent with the Washington state community.

I want to recognize Dr. Len Peters for his leadership and vision during the past 3½ years at PNNL. On behalf of the people of Washington, I wish him all the best in his new position and say thank you for his continued service to our State.

#### WILLING-SELLER LEGISLATION FOR CERTAIN NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM UNITS

### HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I am today introducing legislation to allow people who want to do so to sell lands for inclusion in certain units of the National Trails System.

The bill is identical to ones introduced in previous Congresses by my former Republican colleagues from Colorado, Representatives Beauprez and McInnis. It is cosponsored by Representatives EHLERS, KILDEE, KIND, BALDWIN, LEVIN, and PETRI. I greatly appreciate their assistance and support.

Current law prohibits people who own land associated with several units of the Trails System from selling those lands to the federal government for inclusion in those units.

The bill would revise that to allow such sales from willing sellers.

The Trail System units covered by the bill are the Oregon National Historic Trail, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Iditarod National Historic Trail, the North County National Scenic Trail, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Madam Speaker, this bill would make a small but important adjustment to current law. I think it deserves the support of all Members of the House.

#### INTRODUCING THE LEGAL SERVICES BENEFIT ACT

### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join my Subcommittee Ranking Member Mr. CAMP in reintroducing the Legal Services Benefit Act.

Many employees and retirees lost access to affordable preventive legal services when the tax-preferred status of qualified group legal plans sunsetted in 1991. This bill corrects that historic wrong and ensures that millions of workers and retirees have access to employer provided group legal service plans.

Group legal service plans provide employees with low cost, basic legal services, including assistance with the purchase of a home, the preparation of a will, probate services and

the resolution of domestic conflicts, such as child support collection. With evictions and mortgage foreclosures on the rise, legal plans can also help keep employees in their homes and focused on their jobs.

The Legal Services Benefit Act will restore the historic pre-tax treatment of group legal services under Section 120 of the Internal Revenue Code. This change to the tax code will again make legal service plans affordable for both employers and employees, and will provide access to legal services for millions of middle-income Americans who might otherwise let legal troubles get out of hand.

I thank many of my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee who have already joined us as original cosponsors of this bill, and I urge all members to support this important legislation that will help workers and businesses across the Nation.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CORNERSTONE CLUBHOUSE IN PHOENIXVILLE FOR THEIR "BEYOND THE LABEL" CAMPAIGN

### HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the Cornerstone Clubhouse in Phoenixville, PA for their ongoing "Beyond the Label" campaign to raise awareness of the many illnesses and challenges people with mental health disabilities face.

The Cornerstone Clubhouse is an important resource for the people struggling with mental health problems in Phoenixville and the surrounding communities of Chester County. The organization's purpose is to promote early intervention and recovery from mental illnesses by offering a support system that helps them find employment and residential living opportunities and deal with daily life issues.

Individuals with mental health disabilities join the Clubhouse and then visit the facility on a voluntary basis to raise awareness of these disabilities by passing out informational materials and writing newsletters. On any given day, up to 40 people can be found at the Clubhouse and this interaction with others helps these individuals develop the valuable social, work and life skills needed to be successful.

So, Madam Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join me in acknowledging the dedication and hard work of the Cornerstone Clubhouse in Phoenixville and its successful "Beyond the Label" campaign, which has been an important tool in the community to raise awareness and shine a light on the struggles people with mental illnesses face everyday.

#### COMMISSION ON SLAVERY ESTABLISHED IN ROMANIA

### HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, 200 years ago, the movement for the abolition

of slavery achieved a major victory with the passage of a British law banning the trade in slaves—an anniversary that is getting heightened attention with the release of a new movie chronicling those events. Ending the trade in slaves was not the same as actually ending slavery, but it was a critical beginning to the end.

Other developments have also caused us to revisit the legacy of slavery in our own country. This includes the decision by the legislature of the Commonwealth of Virginia to apologize for that state's role in the slave trade, and reports that Maryland and Missouri are considering similar steps.

With a view to our own country's painful and complicated history of slavery, and as the first African-American Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I was particularly interested to learn about commemorations held on February 20th in Romania, marking the beginning of the end of slavery in that country. In the case of Romania, however, slaves were not kidnapped and transported from a faraway land. Instead, those enslaved were Roma, a people that had settled in Romania by the 14th century.

This ethnic group—somewhere around 1,000 years ago—migrated to Europe from what is now India. Today, Roma make up the largest ethnic minority in the European Union, conservatively estimated at 10 million people.

Romania, with an estimated 2 million Roma, has the largest Romani minority on the continent. And in that country, beginning in the 14th century and ending with the establishment of the modern Romanian state in 1864, slavery to the crown, to nobility, and to the monasteries was the exclusive status of Roma.

To be clear, Roma were not serfs; they were slaves, bought and sold like chattel. In 1837, the great Romanian historian and statesman Mihail Kogalniceanu described their situation as follows:

On the streets of the Iasi of my youth, I saw human beings wearing chains on their arms and legs, others with iron clamps around their foreheads, and still others with metal collars about their necks. Cruel beatings, and other punishments such as starvation, being hung over smoking fires, solitary imprisonment and being thrown naked into the snow or the frozen rivers, such was the fate of the wretched Tsigan [Rom]. The sacred institution of the family was likewise made a mockery: women were wrested from their men, and daughters from their parents. Children were torn from the breasts of those who brought them into this world, separated from their mothers and fathers and from each other, and sold to different buyers from the four corners of Romania, like cattle. Neither humanity nor religious sentiment, nor even civil law, offered protection for these beings. It was a terrible sight, and one which cried out to Heaven.

Unfortunately, it appears that the history of slavery in Romania—and the impact of slavery on the lives of Roma—has received little scholarly attention. As a corollary, little is taught in Romanian schools about this important chapter in the nation's history.

I was very heartened, therefore, to learn that Romanian Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu announced on February 20 that the Romanian Government will establish a commission to study the enslavement of Roma. The National Agency for Roma will play a central role in setting up this commission, and the